

# Rural potters in the Eastern Cape, South Africa: what next?

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Fired clay vessels created by rural potters in remote areas of the former Transkei, Eastern Cape in South Africa, hardly feature at all in thinking, collecting, and writing about ceramics praxis in this province. Yet, such vessels and potters bear further attention, as does the wide variety of technical know-how utilized which results in works featuring extensively differing styles and techniques. This paper thus seeks to engage with a process of finding untold stories so as to address some aspects of neglected status of rural women visual artists, with particular focus on three potters who have successfully worked with clay as medium for their entire adult lives.

**Key words:** rural potters, clay artworks, ceramics technology, southern Africa

## **Landelike pottebakkers in die Ooskaap, Suid-Afrika: wat is die toekomsverwagting?**

Verwysings na gebakte kleipotte wat landelike pottebakkers in afgeleë gebiede van die voormalige Ooskaap in Suid-Afrika vervaardig, ontbreek bykans geheel en al in denke, versamelings en geskrewe bronne oor die keramiekpraktyk in hierdie provinsie. Desnieteenstaande verdien sodanige potte en pottebakkers ernstige aandag. Ook behoort daar aandag geskenk te word aan groot verskeidenheid tegniese vaardighede waarmee werke van hoogs verskillende style en tegnieke vervaardig word. Hierdie artikel het ten doel om 'n proses in te lei om onvertelde verhale op te teken ten einde die verwaarloosde status van landelike vrouens as visuele kunstenaars reg te stel. Meer spesifiek word gefokus op drie vrouens wat hulle hele volwasse lewe met welslae met klei as 'n medium gewerk het.

**Sleutelwoorde:** Landelike pottebakkers, kunswerke van klei, keramiektegnologie, suidelike Afrika

**A**lice Nongebeza and Debra Nomathansanqa Ntloya (figure 1) respectively of Tombo and Chaguba in the sub-tropical Port St Johns region, and Mathabo Sekhobo (figure 2) who lives inland at Thabalesoba in the Sterkspruit region which borders on Lesotho, are three of the few remaining potters utilizing pre-electrification technology who are still working in the Eastern Cape, one of South Africa's poorest provinces.



**Figure 1**  
Alice Nongebeza, left, and Debra Nomathansanqa Ntloya



**Figure 2**  
Mathabo Sekhobo

People in South Africa, despite experiencing a relatively stable and thriving economy<sup>1</sup> and being well into a second decade of democracy, are still beset by many social ills<sup>2</sup> and, on average, a strongly patrilineal social environment<sup>3</sup> puts rural women at a disadvantage. It is thus against a background of economic and other hardships that focus will fall in this paper on notable individuals such as Nongebeza, Ntloya, and Sekhobo as a means towards calling attention to a neglected status of both rural women as artists and clay as medium<sup>4</sup> in our contemporary Eastern Cape visual arts landscape.

Ceramics praxis in the Eastern Cape results, much like elsewhere in South Africa, in extremes wherein, for example, those works created in an urban studio environment such as *Bicycle* by Mathemba Ncoyini (figure 3) become inevitably contrasted with *Vessel*, for example, created by Sekhobo (figure 4). The former genre of ceramics easily find their way into public

exhibition spaces such as the Ann Bryant Gallery in East London, and often command high prices, while the latter are usually informally traded and can only very rarely, if at all, be seen in an urban style Art Gallery type of setting. Dramatic contrasts between these works and the environments wherein they were created and traded do indeed exist. This dichotomy between what is frequently called art and craft also has much to do with perceptions that value particular types of technology and ways of thinking over others, such perceptions in turn contributing, at least partially, to determination of marketability and associated monetary value. Yet *Bicycle* and *Vessel* each represent successful expressions of creative drives resulting in aesthetically refined three-dimensional forms which respectively also reflect superb clayworking skills as well as intimate knowledge of medium and firing techniques, and should be recognised as such.



Figure 3

Mathemba Ncoyini, *Bicycle* (2006, East London, Collection: The artist).



Figure 4

Mathabo Sekhobo, *Vessel* (2005, 370mm h x 325mm w. East London. Collection: John Steele).

I thus, for many and differing reasons, value and enjoy both *Bicycle* and *Vessel* equally, and find myself seeking conceptual liberation in a manner recommended by Homi Bhabha (Bhabha to Mitchell: 4) who commented that cumulative "small differences and slight alterations and displacements [in ways of thinking] are ... significant elements in a process of subversion or transformation" away from, in this case, art/craft dichotomous classificatory systems. Nomenclature and ways in which word usage tells about and influences how people think<sup>5</sup> is of direct relevance here, and upon closer inspection it can be found that some ideas associated with words such as art, craft, colonial/post-colonial<sup>6</sup>, style<sup>7</sup>; culture<sup>8</sup>; material culture<sup>9</sup>; heritage<sup>10</sup>; indigenous<sup>11</sup>; traditional<sup>12</sup>; identity<sup>13</sup>; and many more are heavily loaded because they can be used in a way that connotes other to which a gaze<sup>14</sup> is turned, often reflecting thought patterns and vested interests that seem to be part of what Lize van Robbroeck (2004: 47) has termed a "vastly arrogant and Eurocentric 'international' high art arena" that often serves to sustain economic marginalisation of historically disadvantaged persons and their artworks despite political liberation. Consequently, abandoning art/craft dichotomous language, in much the same way as local Xhosa language, for example, does not make the distinction<sup>15</sup>, seems to me to be an important step towards valorising rural artists and artworks previously sidelined, and thus contributing to redressing aspects of neglected status and concomitant difficulties experienced in generating viable incomes from artistic production experienced by many rural women artists.

A further aspect of a drive towards redressing neglected status of rural women visual artists, whether working as individuals or co-operatively, is to unhinge anonymity that so often accompanies artistic production in such circumstances. Some rural artists may well function within a house style characteristic of contemporary thought patterns, region in which they live, and/or co-operative with whom they are affiliated, yet each artist will also quite likely practice particular technical and stylistic idiosyncrasies that result in recognisably distinct bodies of work. Marginalisation can thus be countered by coming to know individuals and aspects of their quirks. Thus, with specifically such an intention in mind, this paper will focus on aspects of the life, works, procedures and technology utilised by Nongebeza, with regular reference being made to those of Ntloya and Sekhobo where such complementarity broadens perspectives.

Nongebeza (figure 5) was born in 1928 and is a Xhosa speaker of Mpondo background. She relates that she started creating ceramics in 1950 at age 22 years after a series of dreams which occurred while she was miserable with grief shortly after the death of two sons in quick succession. She was literally "told to make pots" (Gerardy 2000: 5) as well as where to find clay in these dreams, so she went to two neighbours who were potters and asked them to show her how to proceed. She started off making utilityware for household use, and still collects clay from exactly the site (figure 6) shown in her dreams, located in the next valley towards the sea, about halfway down a steep incline reached by pathway in dense subtropical bush, approximately two hours from the homestead by foot, or 20 minutes by strong vehicle with high clearance.



Figure 5  
Alice Nongebeza



Figure 6  
Nongebeza and extended family with friends digging clay which is then carried up the hillside to the road.

Back at the homestead the clay can be stored (figure 7) indefinitely, but is usually used soon after being dug. The coarse and finer clays from the two different layers are mixed, and these components are worked into a composite clay by pounding it on flat stones (figure 8) using heavy hammers (figure 9) and other tools. At this point large impurities such as stones and roots are removed by hand and water can be added for workability if necessary.



Figure 7  
Nongebeza clay storage system in galvanised iron containers that are stacked on top of each other, the whole pile being covered in plastic to avoid evaporation when not in use.



Figure 8  
Extended family and friends engaged in pounding the clay into a workable consistency.



Figure 9  
Some of Nongebeza's clay pounding tools.

Thereafter fat sausages of clay are pressed out using both hands (figure 10), and then divided up into stubby segments which are rolled out on tightly woven grass mats into coils of even thickness and regular length (figure 11), ready for use once vessel building has begun. At about this time a ball of clay will have been patted flat on a piece of heavy plastic, usually using a stone (figure 12).



Figure 10

Long sausages of clay being pressed out by Nongebeza prior to subdivision into stubs.



Figure 11

Coils of clay being rolled out that the clay receives from by Nesiwe, granddaughter of Nongebeza. Nongebeza. helps



Figure 12

Establishing the base of a vessel. The gentle patting of the clay receives from Nongebeza probably also helps compact the clay and thus minimise base cracking at a later stage.

The flattened piece of clay will become the vessel base, its diameter varying according to whether it will become a large or small vessel. The edges (figure 13) of this thickish base get turned up to receive the first few rather fat coils. Once these have been joined and the base has been established then several thinner coils of regular thickness are placed above each other in approximately the shape desired, then worked together and joined well to form the wall of the vessel, which grows very rapidly.

As soon as a basic shape has been accomplished the nearly completed vessel is dampened with a sponge (figure 14) and the shape is refined, and joins are checked for strength. Once that process has been attended to then the vessel rim is levelled with a knife (figure 15), whereafter engraved designs (figure 16) may be applied freehand with a pointed tool, and/or watered down differently coloured clay slips (figure 17), if any, are applied with a sponge. For coloured clay slip Nongebeza favours use of an iron bearing earth, known as *imbola*, which is dug locally from next to a spring on a hillside quite near to their homestead and is applied after having been crushed and mixed with water. The raw clay vessel responds very positively to extra water received from sponging and applying slips and is not at all inclined to slump and collapse. This quality of damp strength means that even large vessels of up to a metre tall can be completed in one sitting (figure 18), although it is also quite acceptable for a vessel to be left partway completed so long as it is covered in plastic during the interim so as to avoid excessively quick drying. The pace of drying must be carefully regulated because the receiving clay surface should always still be damp when further coils are added the following day otherwise the join may be unsuccessful. During the drying process medium and larger sized vessels are turned upside down so that their bases can be tidied up, and at this point they are usually signed (figure 19). Particularly large works are dried under blankets (figure 20) to slow down the process and thus avoid cracks that could be caused by uneven drying that may result from draughts.



Figure 13  
Stages, left to right, in coiling a vessel shape



Figure 14  
Nongebeza sponging clay surface.



Figure 15  
Nongebeza using knife to level rim.



Fig 16  
Nesiwe applying freehand engraved design.



Figure 17  
Watered down earth heavy in iron oxide being applied to damp clay surface by Nesiwe as soon as vessel shape and engravings have been established. This slip is best applied while the clay surface is damp in order to ensure adhesion.



**Fig 18**

**Large vessels made in one sitting.**



**Fig 19**

**All works are signed.**



**Fig 20**

**Large works drying under cover.**

Once the works are completely dry they are burnished (figure 21) by systematically applying a heavy pressure across the clay surface using various quite worn out kitchen utensils. Apart from creating a lovely relatively smooth surface, this burnishing phase is critical for strength in firing because if either joining during the making process or burnishing at this stage are inadequately done the clay surface tends to spall and crack with the sudden thermal shock that the works experience when being fired. After about a week of drying in a relatively draught-free environment the works are ready to fire, but before moving on to that stage of proceedings it is appropriate to briefly consider some similarities and differences between Nongebeza and Ntloya/ Sekhobo clayworking practices. This will not be an exhaustively comprehensive comparison, but rather a quick overview look which highlights certain similarities and differences, aimed primarily at contextualising Nongebeza ceramics praxis.

Like Nongebeza, Debra Nomathamsamnqa Ntloya was born in 1928, so these remarkable women are also age mates. Ntloya founded the Vukani Co-operative in 1984 with 18 members, one of whom was her beadworker sister-in-law, Mathamsamnqa Mlungu (figure 22). Ntloya lives about 5 kilometres away from Nongebeza in the direction of Port St Johns, and was also for many years a member of Thembaletu Potters Co-operative founded by Nongebeza. Significant variants in ceramics praxis from those of Nongebeza include that Ntloya allows her recently dug clay dry out completely prior to grinding it into a fine powder (figure 23) in preparation for rehydration and use. This gives her a finer clay body with smaller average particle size than that of Nongebeza. Ntloya's point of departure for vessel construction technique is similar to Nongebeza in that coils built upon a flat base is her favoured method (figure 24). On the whole it seems, however, that works created by Ntloya are usually much smaller than those of Nongebeza (figure 25), and feature a thinner wall thickness with more extensive burnishing refinements. Furthermore, in contrast to Nongebeza who generally favours creation of robust utilityware, Ntloya favours making such items as vessels decorated after firing using bright enamel colours, as well as rondavels and three legged pots, and birds. It is also noteworthy that Ntloya's favoured fuel for firing is cow dung, and that smallish firings take place in an old metal basin which allows for greater control and less risk of thermal shock damage due to unexpected breezes.

Figure 21

Nesiwe, Siziwe Sotewu, and Nongebeza burnishing. It is interesting to note that the vessel being burnished by Nesiwe features a band of applied red iron bearing earth slip, above which a band of darker coal dust based slip has been applied, which can also be seen on the triangles of the vessel at her feet. This was the very first time that coal dust slip had been used, indicating an interest in experimentation, also seen in the unusual shapes of Fig 44 on left, that respectively indicate attitudes towards style and media that are dynamic and open to new ideas and interpretations.



Figure 22  
Ntloya, left, and Mlungu.

Figure 23  
Ntloya grinding dry clay.

Figure 24  
Ntloya beginning to coil vessel.



Figure 25  
Smaller items favoured by Ntloya in foreground, left, and creating a small bird, right



Figure 26  
Mathabo Sekhobo , centre, with fellow Ikaneng Pottery Co-operative members Mathabo Mahlodi, left, and Matankiso Molefe, right, and children.



Figure 27  
Matriarch potters Maoetsi Letsoisa, left, and her sister Mantifeleng who live in the Matsoiseng Village area, located towards Lundean's Nek from Sterkspruit.



Fig 28  
Treasured burnishing stone.

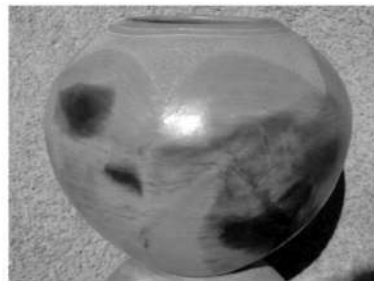


Fig 29  
Wedged clay ready for use.



Mathabo Sekhobo (figure 26), on the other hand, is about two decades younger than both Nongebeza and Ntloya, and grew up in a family of potters in the almost inaccessible Matsoiseng Village area in the mountainous inland Sterkspruit region which borders on Lesotho, about six hours hard driving from the coastal town of Port St Johns. Sekhobo was taught by her mother, Maoetsi Letsoisa (figure 27) who was taught by her own mother before that, a lineage of potters valued by Sekhobo, who still uses a (figure 28) burnishing stone much favored by her grandmother. Unlike Nongebeza and Ntloya, Sekhobo digs her clay quite close to her homestead, and part of her preparation technique is to thoroughly work her clay (figure 29) in a contemporary spiral wedging style which aligns clay particles and eliminates pockets of air, a technique taught to her by renowned potter Meshack Masuku in 2001.

Sekhobo's favored construction technique for larger vessels (figure 30) also differs from Nongebeza and Ntloya in that she starts her vessels just below the midriff in an old enamel bowl for support and builds to the rim using coils of clay on the first day, and then on the next day the vessel is placed upside down and what is to become the base has clay added which then facilitates shaping and closure of that base. This technique allows for gracefully rounded shapes on relatively small bases (figure 31), quite similar in general base shape to southern African Kalundu Tradition ceramics (figure 32) created more than a millennium ago. Sekhobo only rarely engraves or applies slip to the surfaces of her vessels, relying mainly on burnishing and flame created colorings that result from reduction atmospheres<sup>16</sup> that can arise during solid fuel firings. Sekhobo (figure 33) utilizes a combination of cow dung and wood for fuel placed inside and around the works prior to firing in an oval stone structure that serves as a kiln which has the walls lowered or raised depending on number and size of works to be fired. Once packed the top of this rudimentary kiln is partly sealed, as in a clamp, with old potsherds and bits of metal, thus facilitating heat retentions and slowing the rate of burn, thereby facilitating a relatively gentle and thorough firing of all works.



**Fig 30**  
Left, Sekhobo vessels being started halfway in enamel bowl.

**Fig 31**  
Above, Sekhobo *Vessel 11* (2006, 170mm h x 215mm w. East London. Collection: John Steele).



**Fig 32**  
Right, First-Millennium Agriculturist vessel, 320mm h x 320mm w, excavated near Durban in present day Kwa-Zulu-Natal, collection Natal Museum, Pietermaritzburg.



Figure 33

Sekhobo explains the workings of her kiln and firing style to Gcinikhaya Dase and Siziwe Sotewu.



Fig 34

Molefe, left, and Sekhobo approach vessel construction in different ways.

Just as individual clayworking techniques differ (figure 34) wherein, for example, Sekhobo will make a vessel in two halves but her fellow co-operative member Molefe will proceed with coils off a flat base and construct from that base upwards, so finishing styles are also an agglomeration of a series of choices made in conjunction with handed-down knowledge combined with own technical know-how about raw materials qualities and desired results (figure 35). Likewise, firing procedures seem to also usually be highly individualized according to what is known to work well in local circumstances combined with ideas about how best to achieve desired results. In the mountains towards Lundean's Nek, for example, there is Matakatso Letsoisa (figure 36), Sekhobo's niece, who by means of very intense heat has managed to almost melt the clay surface and get extraordinary colors and clay textures as a result.



Fig 35

Mathabang Mosuhli, left, of Herschel in the Sterkspruit area, burnishes her works with rendered butter prior to firing with cow dung, resulting in the characteristically wonderful glow that she is able to achieve.

On the other hand, Maofela Taledi, of Palmietfontein near Telle Bridge on the border of Lesotho, creates much larger works and utilizes applied oxide in well defined patterns after firing.



In contrast to Letsoisa's approach to firing, Thembisa Gqadavama (figure 37), taught by Ntloya, fires in an excruciatingly careful manner. She has described that she will make a fire in a nearby forest for maximum protection from wind, and then place three or four pots to be fired next to that fire, turning them every so often until she is confident they have been evenly and thoroughly warmed, and then the vessels will each slowly be introduced to the full heat of that wood fire.

On the other hand, Nongebeza's firing style is very different, and quite possibly subjects the clay to maximum thermal shock imaginable. Firing must occur on a relatively windless day, and takes place in an open field. Prior to firing the arduous task of wood collection (figure 38) must be undertaken, and the firing site be prepared. Also, unfired pots are brought out at this

stage, and these already dry works are placed on a blanket in the sun so they do not absorb any moisture at all from the earth. Once the site has been cleared a basic rectangular structure with hollow interior is built using quite large and longish logs (figure 39). The area this structure covers is determined by the number and size of works to be fired. This hollow framework effectively becomes a wall similar to that built by Sekhobo which serves to contain combustion within a specific space, but being built of wood these walls are combustible and contribute to high firing temperature once ignited. Once the log framework has been established it is filled with brushwood (figure 40) that will burn more quickly and intensely than the surrounding log structure.

Dried grass and other easily combustible materials are placed on top of the pile, as well as old bits of plastic which once ignited (figure 41) facilitate rapid progress towards creation of a bonfire which is distributed as evenly as possible and given a few moments to spread thoroughly. Thereafter works will be rapidly, yet carefully placed directly into the blaze (figure 42), quite close together and even sometimes on top of each other, all being contained within the log framework which soon also begins to burn fiercely. Once most of the items have been placed in the fire more wood is added to the top, then the firing is allowed to take its course with regular additions of more works (figure 43) and fuel. Peak heat is rapidly reached, and soon thereafter begins to subside, and then as newly fired vessels become evident and accessible

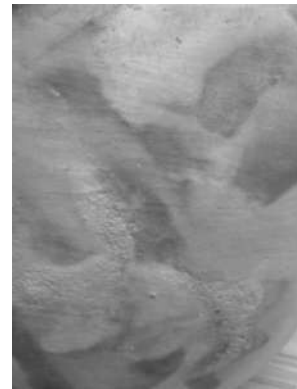


Fig 36  
Matakatso Letsoisa, and close-up on right of vessel surface. The entire vessel, on left, 2005, measures 330mm h x 285mmw. (East London. Collection: John Steele).



Fig 37  
Thembisa Gqadavama with son displaying unfired vessels, left. It is interesting to note that some of her shapes, such as the one that she is holding, are sensitively innovative. Furthermore, she has scraped a geometric pattern through the surface patina of the fired vessel on right, also quite an unusual procedure. This vessel on right, 2003, measures 185mm h x 190mm w. (East London. Collection: John Steele).

(figure 44) they are removed using long sticks well before the fire has died down completely. Despite extreme thermal shock resulting from this firing method the success rate is very high, with less than 15% of works spalling badly or cracking, and cracks are usually easily fixed by filling with an adhesive putty.



Figure 38  
Nesiwe Nongebeza, Nonzuzo Nongebeza, and Onele Jikandaba, from left, bring loads of wood which accounted for less than half of what the firing required.



Figure 39  
Nongebeza and assistants laying out log structure that will contain the kiln



Figure 40  
Assistants place brushwood then lighter kindling and straw within log structure, ensuring all space is densely filled. Pots to be fired, on far right, await placement.



Figure 41  
Left: Lighting up.  
Middle: A pensive moment.  
Above: Nongebeza managing the blaze from a shady spot. No ceramics have yet been introduced to the fire.



Figure 42  
Works are quickly placed directly on raging fire.



Figure 43

More wood is piled on top of the works already placed, then more vessels were added, followed by more wood.



Figure 44

Works are removed soon after peak temperature is reached.

On the following day works were cleaned then waxed (figure 45) using a clear polish usually utilized on wooden floors, put out in the sun to soften and melt the wax, and then brushed again so as to achieve a gentle glow. Then the various vessels and other items were gathered together, ready to be marketed. It is from this stage onwards, in my opinion, where most problems mitigating against sustainability of a relatively good income seem to arise.



Figure 45

Cleaning and waxing in preparation for marketing.



**Figure 46**

**Youngsters such as, from left, Ringo Nongebeza, Nomvuyiso Ntloya, Giniza Nongebeza, as well as Matakato and Mamshwabade Letsoisa, have knowledge and interest, and are likely to continue creating new works if regular markets can be found.**

According to Nongebeza and Ntloya problems encountered such as poverty and crime<sup>17</sup> obstruct their best efforts at reaching or creating regular sustainable markets. Furthermore, initiatives aimed at connecting up with regional Provincial Department of Arts and Culture have been sporadic and proved somewhat discouraging to date. Yet, on the other hand, Sekhobo in the Sterkspruit region has reported a growth phase in sales and many constructive interactions with Provincial Department of Arts and Culture in that area. Despite difficulties and inconsistencies there are determined efforts at establishing stabilized markets in both the Port St Johns and Sterkspruit regions because income has to be created no matter what, and then also youngsters such as Nongebeza's grandson Ringo and others (figure 46) would feel encouraged to turn skills acquired while growing up into financially viable small business ventures if such problems as prevalence of crime and extreme distance from regular markets could be addressed. Conversely, it is likely that persons with knowledge of such ceramics technology who practice it daily and as a way of life will disappear entirely if the crucial matter of marketing remains unresolved.

## **Acknowledgements**

I am grateful to the various potters mentioned for welcoming me, and also thank Gcinikhaya Dase and Siziwe Sotewu for help with translation. The financial assistance of the Walter Sisulu University is hereby acknowledged. All views expressed are my own.

## **Notes**

- 1 An example of this matter being reflected upon can be found in the article entitled "An embarrassment of riches" by Brendan Boyle (Sunday Times Business Times February 18, 2007: 1) wherein he writes that South African "Finance Minister Trevor Manuel will present the country's first balanced budget in modern times on Wednesday ... (and) ... another huge revenue overrun ... will leave Manuel with an embarrassment of riches in the current and coming years".
- 2 See, for example, Mail and Guardian Feb 2007, 9-15: 1, 8 & 9 which dealt with social factors and perceptions of crime rates resulting in a near-launch of the FNB Anti-Crime Campaign, and social pressures that then resulted in this campaign being withdrawn at the last minute.
- 3 See, for example, Peires 2003: 8, 23 and Kuckertz 1990: 161 whose research indicates that primary attention is expected to fall on males and their needs. Such attitudes have ramifications throughout society and permeate daily life, putting women at a disadvantage. Nongebeza, for instance, has stated that her late husband did not care about providing for their children, and that he would come and ask for money for beer whenever he saw that she had made a sale, and even on occasions stole money by force. Ntloya has also confirmed that she faced similar problems, and has said that she used to tell untruths about how much money had been earned through sales of pots because her late husband would demand all of it and there would be none left for looking after the children.

- 4 Prudence Rice (1991: 43 6) has, in this regard, noted that women potters face a double-marginalization in that "Pottery making is typically seen as women's work, and the roles of women's work and domestic activities have long been ignored or undervalued".
- 5 Two quick examples from past writings that are ceramics related which reflect extreme prejudice in nomenclature used include John Schofield's (1948) early research into southern African prehistoric ceramics entitled "Primitive pottery ..." which immediately places the writer as superior and sophisticated compared to the ceramic works which are thus characterised as crude and rudimentary. PW Laidler (1929: 759) is much more explicit, in the tone of that era, in one of his classifications of southern African ceramics wherein he refers to what he calls "late degenerate pots" that, in the context, ascribes degenerate character to peoples responsible for making vessels of this classification. See Steele 2001 for further details.
- 6 See, for example, Ahmad 1995; Holler 2002; Kaviraj 1994; Mbembe 2001.
- 7 See, for example, Bell 1993; Bhabha 1994; Chakrabarty 1992; Conkey & Hastorf 1990; Hegmon 1992; Hodder 1990; Preucel & Hodder 1996; Sackett 1986; Weissner 1984, 1985 & 1990; Wobst 1977.
- 8 See, for example, Appadurai 2002; Baudrillard 1983; Fanon 1968; Huffman 1998; Jay 1993; Myers 1991 & 1994; O'Hanlon & Washbrook 1992; Pred 2002; Young 1991.
- 9 See, for example, Boram-Hayes 2005; Coombes 1994; De Maret 1999; Jacobson-Widding 1979; Klopper 2004; Kohl 1993; Miller 1995; Nettleton & Hammond-Tooke 1989; Preziosi 1989; Pritchard & Van der Leeuw 1984; Rowlands 1996; Schmahmann 2005; Solomon 1998 & 1999.
- 10 See, for example, Bausinger 1990; Clifford 1981; Deacon 2004; Graham 2002; Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1988, 1995, 1998 & 2004; Nora 1989; Pries 2002; Rowe & Schelling 1991; Stewart 1991.
- 11 See, for example, Green & Green 2003; McIntyre 2002: 211.
- 12 See, for example, Hobsbawm & Ranger 1983.
- 13 See, for example, Alam 1993; Apffel-Marglin & Mishra 1995; Arnold 1984; Bahl 1997; Banerjee 1999; Klopper & Godby 2004; Laclau 2002; Pigg 2002; Rovine 2004; Wells 2003: 80.
- 14 Other and gaze as used by Spivak 1988, and Bender 1999.
- 15 In discussion with Xhosa first language speakers Siziwe Sotewu and Gcinikhaya Dase (2001) it has emerged that they are familiar with use of the word "ubugcisa" as a collective art/craft word indicating "made by people's hands in a creative way" which entirely circumvents valorization of value of one such product over another on the basis of medium or aesthetic appeal.
- 16 A reduction atmosphere occurs when there is incomplete combustion of fuel due to inadequate oxygen even though the fire is hot enough for combustion to take place.
- 17 Crime is preventing both Ntloya and Nongebeza, for example, from encouraging extended family members to try and sell their ceramics from the nearby national road because it is feared that thieves will rob takings, and anyway, tourists and other potential non-resident buyers are thought to be unlikely to stop on the roadside because of a quite well founded fear of murder or mugging.

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John Steele worked as a production potter for a decade during the 1970s and early 1980s at Rhodes village in the Eastern Cape. There was no electricity to this village in those days, so active engagement with pre-electrification ceramics technology was essential. During the following decade he managed the Ikhwezi Lokusa Pottery in Mthatha, and during this time became interested in prehistoric First-Millennium Agriculturist southern African ceramics after having come into contact with archaeologist Frans Prins who was conducting excavations in the former Transkei region at the time. During this era he also met rural potters Alice Nongebeza and Debra Ntloya, amongst others, and an early mutual interest in differing ceramics praxis has led to current more focussed researches. A move to East London in the early 1990s resulted in the establishment of another personal ceramics studio, and he also began lecturing Art Theory and Ceramics at Border Technikon, now Walter Sisulu University, where he is currently Head of the Fine Art Department.